

The responsibility of "acceptable use" comes with the privilege of Internet access that is afforded to students, staff, and, sometimes, parents. No one should be using the Internet in a school or district environment until that person has reviewed and signed the agency's AUP. Where students are concerned, parents need to review the AUP and complete the signature page, indicating their understanding

The AUP applies to all users accessing the Internet from agency terminals or computers. This includes teachers, students, parents, and other members of the community who might use the Internet at an agency site. For example, members of the community using school computer labs to learn about technology also need to review the agency's AUP.

The AUP should be available in a variety of formats for those who do not speak English or who have a disability that makes reading the policy impractical. Finally, the agency should avoid including provisions in the policy that it is not willing to enforce, or that will create difficult legal situations by their enforcement. All users need to understand the consequences of failure to comply with the AUP.

**Each AUP should include a detachable page where the user, or the parent or guardian of a student, can acknowledge that he or she has received, read, and understood the policy. The agency should retain this sign-off sheet. No student should have school-based Internet access without specific written approval of a parent or guardian. Parents need to work with agency personnel to ensure that students understand the components of the AUP.**

## *Why We Need the AUP Signed and On File...*

# **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

### *Weaving a Secure Web Around Education:*

A Guide to Technology Standards and Security

[http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2003/secureweb/ch\\_3.asp#H3](http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2003/secureweb/ch_3.asp#H3)

The following information is from the above noted publication.

## **INTRODUCTION**

There are some aspects of web development necessary to meet federal, state, or local laws and regulations. Many of these regulations are adapted from rules or laws that existed before the advent of the Internet. For example, education agencies have long been required to comply with copyright regulations, Sunshine Laws (see below), and student privacy rights. New technologies mean that new procedures may need to be in place.

An Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) should be developed by an agency that allows students, staff, or community members to use computers or to connect to the Internet through the agency. The intent of an AUP is not to exclude anyone from using a computer, but to be certain that everyone understands that this usage is a privilege that can only be retained with appropriate usage.

## **INTERNET USAGE**

At the same time an agency is deciding on content for a prospective web site, agency staff should think about related policy issues and guidelines that will affect the entire organization. Even though the World Wide Web has been around for a relatively short time, the Internet has been in general use long enough that effective practices already exist based on well-known pitfalls. Now is the time, if the organization has not done so recently, to review Internet policies and procedures.

Many of the needed policies, such as "*acceptable use*" and "*right to know*," have legal implications and may be required by local, state, or federal regulations. This chapter provides general guidelines for awareness of potential legal issues, but does not purport to give legal advice. Specific legal questions should be discussed with the agency's attorney.

While many school districts and state departments of education are attuned to the need for many of the policies and guidelines described below, the school technology coordinator and/or the students creating the school web site may not be aware of the policy issues that arise when a web site is developed. The district is ultimately responsible for its school web sites and must ensure that each school adheres to applicable laws and regulations.

## **ACCEPTABLE USE POLICIES**

Whether an organization provides direct services to students or serves as a support or regulatory body for schools, adoption of an AUP is essential. The purpose of this policy is to inform users of the ground rules, thus protecting them and the education agency from violations of law, practices that would damage the system, or misunderstandings regarding who is responsible for what